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SUBJECT: GUINEA POST-COUP: A POLITICAL ROUNDUP FOR 18
FEBRUARY TO 5 MARCH

REF: CONAKRY 0131

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Politics in Guinea continue to be fluid since the coup d'etat on 23 December 2008. Given these circumstances, Post will periodically transmit roundups of significant political and economic events not covered in other reporting. This roundup covers the period between 18 February and 5 March, and includes plans for Dadis' inauguration ceremony, an illegal search of a labor union leader's private residence, creation of a National Audits Commission, and calls for the creation of a national commercial airline. END SUMMARY.

INAUGURATION PLANS

¶2. (SBU) In late February, the CNDD formally established a committee to organize Moussa Dadis Camara's presidential inauguration ceremony. According to sources, the committee is tasked with organizing cultural and sporting activities to celebrate the event. In addition, the committee will handle protocol, security, reception of foreign dignitaries, and media coverage. A date for the ceremony has not been announced. Some contacts are questioning why Dadis needs a formal ceremony if he does not plan to stay in office. On March 3, the CNDD announced over national television that people had been going around to collect financial donations from individuals and companies for the ceremony. A CNDD spokesperson said that no such collection had been authorized and promised to provide a national "hotline" phone number that citizens could call to report such activities.

OUSMANE CONTE ALIVE AND WELL

¶3. (U) Beginning February 28, rumors that Ousmane Conte, drug kingpin and son of the late President Conte, had died after being picked up by the CNDD on narcotics charges were circulating widely throughout the capital. On March 3, Ousmane himself announced over national radio that he was alive and well. He advised the public to stop spreading rumors and lies.

REASSURING THE TROOPS

¶4. (SBU) The week of March 2, CNDD member and Minister of Defense, General Sekouba Konate, reportedly conducted a tour of Conakry's military garrisons in order to talk to the troops and assure them of the CNDD's commitment to improve their general living conditions. Konate urged the troops to respect military discipline and hierarchy.

SEARCH AT UNION LEADER'S RESIDENCE

15. (SBU) While union leader Hadja Rabiatou Diallo was out of town, an official from the Office for Anti-Narcotics and High Crimes, accompanied by several men in military uniform, searched her private residence in Conakry on March 3. Rabiatou told Pol LES that the officials did not have a search warrant, but told her housekeeper that they were going to search the premises for narcotics. According to Rabiatou, the search was precipitated by the negative reaction of some members of the CNDD to her strong public stance against narcotics, and because of her role as a prominent member of Les Forces Vives. She told Pol LES that the CNDD was trying to intimidate her. (COMMENT. Sensitive sources indicate that Rabiatou may be under investigation because she bought a house in Europe. END COMMENT).

NATIONAL AUDITS

16. (U) On March 3, Dadis formally created a National Audit Commission, composed of three unidentified officials. The Commission is reportedly responsible for defining how the audits will be conducted, reviewing financial records, consulting with independent audit firms, and conducting unannounced visits to government offices. The Commission will get to keep 10% of the debts it collects from individuals and companies.

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A NATIONAL AIRLINE

17. (U) During a ministerial cabinet meeting on March 4, the Government of Guinea authorized the Minister of Transport to create a national airline company. The Minister reportedly argued that there is no reason for Guinea not to have a commercial airline since it possesses the necessary infrastructure. The Ministry anticipates putting out a call for bids.

LOWERING PRICES

18. (U) Effective March 4, the Guinean Butchers' Association agreed to reduce the price of beef from 16,000 GnF (\$3.48) to 14,000 GnF (\$3.04) per kilo. The decision was reportedly reached after the Association met with the Secretary General of the Ministry of Commerce. A contact told Econ LES that the CNDD had asked the Association to reduce the price in order to reflect reduced transportation costs. Word on the street is that Guineans want the price pushed even lower to 10,000 GnF per kilo (\$2.17).

19. (U) Also effective March 4, the Guinean Government officially lowered the price of fuel from 4,800 GnF (\$1.04) to 4,500 GnF (\$.98) per liter. The Minister of Commerce announced that the reduction reflected the continuing decline in world oil prices.

NARCOTICS ARRESTS

10. (SBU) High-profile arrests related to narcotics trafficking continue (reftel). Sources indicate that at least 30 people are being detained at Camp Alpha Yaya.

COMMENT

¶11. (SBU) Dadis continues to make regular public appearances while issuing new decrees and announcements although the pace has been somewhat slower than in previous weeks. Much of the CNDD's focus appears to have shifted to anti-narcotics efforts. Members of the CNDD made little to no mention of elections or a transition timeline, but Les Force Vives met to develop a proposal they plan to present to Dadis within the next few weeks. END COMMENT.

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